

#26AB

Tape 1 (34) - Side 1

Q: Maybe we could start by you telling me where and when you were born and how you came to Seattle.

A: Well I was born September 13, 1900, in the state of Washington. Up in Billingham, Washington. Up about 100 miles north of Seattle. I moved to () county when I was about six months old, and I completed school there and I came down to the university, in 1918.

Q: So you came down to come to the university.

A: Yes.

Q: Your folks stayed up north?

A: No, they moved down before I got down here. My father and mother's business () and so they came down. I wanted to finish high school up there, so I stayed on, finished high school up there and then came down.

Q: Your father was a businessman, then?

A: Yes, he ran a general store.

Q: And did your mother work outside the home, or...

A: No. With 10 children ().

Q: Really. So you came down to go to college. Did you go to the university here?

A: Yeah. Yeah. () the academic courses, and law school.

Q: And law school here at the university.

A: Right.

Q: Do you remember when you were growing up, was politics discussed in your family at all?

A: Very much, yes. Very alert to those things. My father particularly, and so were the children. He really () the discussion. He was vitally interested in everything.

Q: Do you remember what the tone of those topics were? Was it democrat, republican, or labor capital, or...

I would say that he was certainly a republican and I was quite conservative.

A very conservative fellow.

questions of labor discussed as politics, when you think of political discussions

in those days, what were they on?

A: Well, on local issues, on national issues, everything. Both my mother and father were very strong (). They took part in the campaign to do, () and so forth. And () respect (), I certainly love them for it. () but nevertheless, they were very sincere.

Q: So when you came down to Seattle, did he stay in business, here?

A: No, he retired. He retired ().

Q: Do you remember when he came down, what papers they generally read?

A: I believe, if I remember correct, I believe () PI and the Seattle Times.

Q: And then when you were in the university, were you staying with them?

A: Yes.

Q: You read what they read?

A: Yes. M-hmm.

Q: You don't remember the Union Record...

A: Oh, yes. You bet I do, yeah.

Q: Was that something that you read regularly?

A: No. Irregularly, I would say, but it was a pretty lively editorial paper, and again, () I liked the (), and so (). And the Union Record was certainly right in the forefront of that, and many people thought it was dominated. Whether or not it was, I don't know. It was very left-wing, no question about it. And it had at that time, some ties with the labor movement out of the unions. But so that was about the extent of it, and but, no, that's one great thing, I grew up in a family where everybody was interested and argumentative, discussed all the questions all the time.

Q: Good training for a lawyer.

A: Well, yes, and also it was part of the world and part of society.

Q: So at the time the general strike started, were you in the university then?

A: When did you say it started up?

Q: February, 1919.

A: February, 1919, yes. Because I started the university, I would say, in January 1919.

This was the first quarter, because I was up working up in Alaska in the fisheries, and I came back, I was up there, I guess, four months, and then I made arrangements to start in the second quarter.

Q: What kind of work were you doing up in the fisheries?

A: Well, I was a pile driver man. Working on the pile driver, driving fish traps, and then also lifting the traps (), lift the net up and () all the fish out of there into a (). Very interesting, I'll tell you that. It really was. Wonderful experience.

Q: Do you remember why the strike was called?

A: Why it was called?

Q: Or who called it?

A: No. The individual I can't think of right now, who called that strike. And I'm sure there must have been one single individual who instigated it. Who it was, I just can't remember. The name just slipped my mind. One thing, () down to a halt for a few days, all right.

Q: Do you remember beforehand, do you remember between the time when it became clear that there was going to be a strike and the time it actually started, do you remember people talking about it at all, do you remember what people expected of it?

A: Well, I don't think that most people figured it would come off. That's about the size of it. In nature, it's quite revolutionary. And so I think that () and I think that they just talked it off. I'm sure that was the situation.

Q: When you say revolutionary, did people conceive of it beforehand as of a large strike, or as a possible revolution, or ...

A: Uh,...

Q: Did () a radical break with anything beforehand?

A: Well, I would say this, that was the very (), the whole focus of the strike. Disruption and the revolution in Russia had not been too () before that, and Luisa Strong, at that time, she was here and she was revolutionary, and like one name that comes to me right now, I remember her, and so, that was it. And people were very fearful that that's what might take place. They didn't know how far to go, because it's () here, and they

didn't know how much further they'd go, and what they do, you know, you shut down a whole town, and if it's effective, why you can get (). You're helpless.

Q: And what was it actually like, once it started?

A: Well, it was, you know, we didn't have any newspapers, and as a conquest, why alot of rumors, you know, and that sort of thing, but of course, Olie Hansen who was a flamboyant individual at that time, used to come out, you know, and () just not going to have a revolution here, and, don't be afraid, because this thing will be stamped out. That was his attitude and he was very powerful, too. So, if he had any other qualities, he would have been quite a hero. He wasn't too sound. Olie wasn't. So, that's the way, but, no people were worried, no question about it. A general strike can bring you to your knees. If they () can sustain it. We've seen that in France, many times. So, it takes a very vigorous, the thing that I think, though, that they learn one thing, it's very dangerous for them to call a strike of that type, a general strike. I just can't conceive in my lifetime, that we'll see another one. In this country. France has them, and they're usually short strikes, maybe one day, two days, something like that. But not, () demonstrations, more than anything else. And Canada, I wouldn't call it a general strike up there, but some of the same order. In other words, you wouldn't get any mail for six weeks. And that sort of thing. But, and then, I would say, that that time, the leadership used () had the conservative ().

Q: At the time, how did you feel about it, as a student?

A: Well, I think that I () the fact that I was trained to become part of the establishment. And so my thinking went along with the establishment.

Q: Did you see any danger to the city, or how seriously did you take it at the time?

A: Yes, oh, yes. No question about it. No one knew how far it would go. Nationally we didn't know.

Q: That was actually a question, whether it might spread and become a national issue?

A: Yes. It wasn't to () following the Russian revolution, and I'd like to think it remains the attitude, where () men who were, I'll call them revolutionaries, that fellow, ()

Luisa Strong, I had alot of respect for her in some ways, but, you know, you know a person and what their attitude is, if it's subversionary, why, I always say, you're on one side, I'm on the other. But she was () a smart woman.

Q: Did you know her personally?

A: Well, I met her, let's put it that way, and no, I did not really, but I followed her career. She was an interesting personality and she was a radical. Really radical. And she did quite a bit of writing for the Union Record.

Q: Do you remember, do most of your friends and families feel the same way about the strike that you do?

A: Yes.

Q: : Dangerous?

A: Yes, I would say so, yes.

Q: Do you remember if there was any violence that you were aware of, during the strike?

A: If there was, it was extremely minor. But I don't think they called out the national guard, but people fully expected them to, and said that order will be maintained, so he was right on top. And then, I think it only lasted, it lasted less than a week. I was going to say four days, but I'm not sure.

Q: And you said the national guard wasn't here, or the army, or anything like that?

A: No, but I think that they had them on stand-by. That's my feeling, the national guard.

Q: Do you remember the striker's dining halls?

A: No, I don't remember that. I don't think it got very far because it didn't last too long.

Q: Do you know why it ended? Why do people feel it ended at the time?

A: Well, I think this, that they thought it didn't catch on, what with () locally, and so (). And there was a certain rash of emotions when they called it, and then (). The woman at home, she said now wait, you're not working, I'm willing to (), but remember, we've got four kids here, and they have to be fed, and the grocery bill is due and they're not going to give us anymore credit, so you better think about going back to work. And the pressure on the individual is terrific. She's looking at it in a very pragmatic way. And that's true, for that time.

A: Have you had a chance to look at the Union Record?

Q: Some of them.

A: Uh-huh. It's amazing that they could count all these labor unions in going along. It was a revolutionary time. The war just over and that situation in Russia, and so there was ().

Q: Who were the sorts of people that were, not main, was the strike under the leadership of the unions, or the IWW, or...

A: I would say under the IWW. They were the ones who were leading it. And of course, some of these unions may very well have been dominated by them. Newspaper guilds, () dominated.

Q: You mean the PI strike?

A: Yeah, yes. And other times, too. I had a political writer at the PI was a friend of mine. He was, it was an obsession with him. (). Great personal sacrifice, too, because if you've been, followed this labor movement very much, you know, () and they prolong it. You get tired, you go home. Finally they have their hard liners there, and that's, () after everybody else had gone home. So, that thing can occur, and probably did at that time. Now, I am sure that the revolutionaries undoubtedly controlled the ship yard strike. And, they were going through a turmoil, because they weren't going to go for very long. So, where do they go from there? So, that was a fertile field, and they were, I would say, oriented that way. I don't think the longshoremen was really very active. Later they had a big () on it. I think it was about, 30, 31, when Harry took over and the longshoremen (). I thought those guys (). Those were very tough (). You get mixed up with them, why you're going to fight them. Violence is a way of life with them. Harry () and he mechanized the mechanical loading and unloading of ships. You can see down here, all these ().

Tape 1 (34) - Side 2

A: And then () a clip off, too, because I remember they went on strike for higher pay. And they were in a bad way, because they could see the end in the ship yard business. There must have been 40, 50 thousand people employed in those ship yards. And so I

wouldn't be surprised that may have been the thing that tipped it, you know, ().

Q: Was it, in all, worth it? Was the general strike worth it for labor?

A: No. It did them alot of damage.

Q: In what way?

A: Well, number one, that they would cause inconvenience and distress to a great many people who had no part in it at all, one way or the other. The ordinary average person who went down and couldn't get milk at the store, couldn't ride the street car, that sort of thing. So they felt that they were taken advantage of. No, I would say they lost alot of ground from that standpoint. And then () that it was a revolutionary movement, and generally speaking, () they were not in favor. And some of the guys they liked the status quo, is really what it amounts to. At least they wanted an orderly way. So, I would say that plan became apparent () their objectives were along that line, why, they lost alot of ground.

Q: You said a little earlier that you became more conservative...

A: Yes, since that time.

Q: Was that an outgrowth of the strike in any way?

A: I really think so, yeah. I think that the unions and also internationally, got a much firmer grasp on the local unions and that sort of thing. And so, as a consequence, they could, if they got out of line, they could bring them back. And so, yes. I would say that certainly, not labor lost (), but let's say the revolutionary movement, I ().

Q: Did the strike affect your life, or the life or the life of the city?

A: Well, I have to () remember back, but I think that it did, as I remember, I don't () the street cars were running. And whether I was downtown or not, I can't remember. But if I was, I'd probably have to run around to find some place to eat. And I don't think we had any milk deliveries. It was shut down. ().

Q: Did that affect your opinions about labor? Did it change you mind about anything that was going on?

A: Well, except that the only thing is this, change your mind, but at least it solidified your mind in that too much power in the hands of certain individuals, they could close the whole thing down for their own objectives. That solidified that for me.

Q: You mentioned Olie Hansen a while ago, you remember he was mayor during the strike, what do you remember about him?

A: Hansen was a flamboyant individual. And I don't think that, but people didn't regard him as very sound. I believe shortly thereafter, I think he ran for U.S. senator. And, () down to the real estate business, was it Santa Barbara? No...

Q: San Clemente.

A: San Clemente, that's it, yeah. San Clemente. And he never came back. He wasn't, he thought that breaking the strike, that he was going to become a local hero, but his weak points showed through.

Q: Did he, in fact, break the strike?

A: Well, that's a good question, but I would say this, you'd have to give him some credit. He took a very firm position on it, and said that law and order would be maintained. And so it petered out in about five days. I know less than a week. So you've got to give him credit. And I think that the general public did, but they wouldn't give him credit by going to the polls and voting for him, or anything else.

Q: How about Anna Luise Strong, you've mentioned her once or twice.

A: Yeah.

Q: Was your contact with her through reading her column in the Union Record, or reading books that she wrote later?

A: Both. Both, yes. And she wrote for the Union Record, and I may have attended meetings when she came to speak. I don't, I'm not certain about that. She was very, a very familiar character as far as I'm concerned. She was quite a woman. She was dedicated to her views, no question about it. She went over to Russia, she stayed over there (). She more or less broke with them when they broke with the Chinese.

Q: How about Jimmy Duncan, do you remember him?

A: Oh, yes. Jimmy Duncan.

Q: What do you remember about him?

A: Well, in the first place, he was elected to the city council at one time, and whether he was revolutionary or not, I don't know. He had very strong views, and he was a small Scotsman, and a firey sort of a fellow. But I think that he wasn't ().

Q: Was he connected with the strike?

A: I want to say yes, but I just can't put my finger on it, that he had any particular, I would say this, he didn't control the movement. He may have very well been a part of it, but he didn't control it.

Q: Did you know at that time, any people in the IWW, when you were going to school around the time of the strike?

A: Oh, yes. You bet. Yeah. The IWW was up in the woods. Actually, I saw one of them, one of the most horrifying things I've ever seen, being tarred and feathered. It's () for a human being. Because there were mills around there, and that sort of thing. They tried to organize the mill workers and had a following. So, yes, I came in contact with the movement. I knew of them, but anyway ().

Q: But at that time you didn't have acquaintances or friends who were in the IWW?

A: No. That is absolutely correct, because the nature of the thing, as I say, we were part of the establishment. And so most of the IWW's were single men. I worked with them.

Q: You did?

A: Yeah.

Q: How did that happen, that you were doing their work besides...

A: Just to make a few dollars, well, I'd come along and () the cook's vacation, and another time, I got out of school a couple of days early, and went up and worked over Thanks Giving.

Q: How did your folks feel when you did stuff like that? Did they think that was all right?

A: Well, yes. Oh, yes. From that standpoint, they might have worried about it, I wouldn't know () but on the other hand, you can't worry about 10 kids, you know. But it was a tremendous experience. I had no trouble getting a job, but I had trouble holding it. I've been fired off more jobs than you've ever had.

Q: I'd like to ask you a couple of questions about other things in the strike. Maybe you could tell me about some of the jobs that you have had since then, or around that time.

A: Well, number one. I was a packer in the sugar mills, and I () over my head there, too. There were sugar mills in the town we lived in, so I could pack probably 25,000 a day. I thought I was better than I was () about that time they pointed a finger at me and fired me.

Q: This is when you were a kid?

A: Oh, yeah, I was about, probably 15, 16. And then I worked up in the farms up in () county. Putting up hay, and that sort of thing, then I worked on the railroads, the northern railroads as a gandy-dancer. Do you know what a gandy-dancer is?

Q: No, I don't.

A: Well, you know, when you're putting the ties in, you have to put () so they're put solidly in, so I'd put the shovel there and keep working that shovel, see that's why they call you a gandy-dancer, because you're going like that. So I did that, and you know, I was getting \$1.65 for a 10-hour day. And they finally fired me to give a married man my job. Well, good luck to him, for \$1.65. A little bit later I worked in the () to Alaska, and I worked in the fisheries up there, it was a great experience. And I worked on the sound here, in the fisheries. Before I went into law school, I worked in a cigar store here. Up on Pike Street.

Q: This was still in the days when that district was the real rough district?

A: No, no. This was up on a pretty good street up there. But, it just so happened that place was sort of a hang-out. () like the boot-legging days. We'd take orders from boot-leggers. And then I thought there must be an easier way, so then I got a job selling, oh, cigarettes and candy to the canteens in the fraternity house. So I'd say that was the easier way. So that was about it. My folks, they could give me board and room, but they couldn't finance me into anything beyond that. Beyond that I had to get out and earn it.

Q: So this was () situation...

A: Well, that's right, yes. When I was up in Alaska and one day they came out and said

come on and work inside. The cannery. So, I spent a few days in there, and they put me in the () fertilizer department. Oh, the smell was awful. You get that fish oil in your skin and you can take a dozen baths. So I made up my mind, well, by gosh, you know, if I didn't stand up to them, I couldn't get another job, the season was pretty well advanced. I wouldn't be able to go to school. So I said, well, I'm going to stick to it until the fourth of July. If I don't get out of here by the fourth of July, (), I'm going to quit. But, the fourth of July they told me back to the (), I could go outside again.

Q: So you became a lawyer in the late 20's?

A: In 1924. What are you going to do when you get through?

Q: Well, ...

A: You start going into law, you're so busy, you don't have time (). To carry them out. And there's no question about it, () you become part of the establishment. There's no doubt about it, and you might as well make up your mind to. That's what you are. ... So, as a consequence, why you have to watch yourself sometimes. And you have to really remember to (). That's what buys your bread and butter. And the other fellows, the fellows that were into politics, that's about the size of it. Only one fellow I knew who really had a good corporate practice maintained his independence () Spokane. Anyway, he was ultra-liberal. And he never deviated from it, either. Nobody could make him. In spite of that, he was very successful. And that's a fact. But I would guess that the fellow who is () probably would wind up in politics, or in government service. And it's an interesting thing, I look back and say well, what else would I have done, what could I have gone into? What I would have liked to have done is to go to sea. I've been around on small boats, and that sort of thing, but (). But there's no future in it. Well, it's an interesting thing. And I always liked journalism, too. But again, from one standpoint, there's no future in that, either. It pays a little bit better now.

Q: Do you consider yourself a politically active person?

A: No. I've been very active.

Q: You have?

A: Yeah, but, yeah. Extremely active. National politics, but it takes so much energy, I just don't have that much energy anymore.

Q: Back in the days of the strike, were you a politically active person?

A: No, I would say not. When I moved down here, I didn't have a chance to get (). But very shortly thereafter, I became active.

Q: Not as a result of the strike?

A: No. No relationship at all.

Q: What sorts of organizations did you belong to?

A: Well, I belong to local () that sort of thing, I belonged to the republican club, I joined it in 1942, which is the dominating republican club here. And then I took an active part in the selection of delegates for the national convention, republican side. That () tremendous. Tremendously interesting. I don't have () the energy. I thought about it this last time, and I just didn't have the energy.

Q: Has there been a political leader in recent years that you felt spoke for you?

A: No. Ford () I know what his limitations are and a lot of things that he did, why, I liked. And, as a matter of fact, there are some things about Carter that I like. I think that both of them, neither one of them are broad-minded. And so, ().

Q: What do you think have been the major events in national and world history since the days of the strike?

A: Well, of course you have to say the world war and the Korean war, () Viet Nam war. And then, I think that the, well you have to say the amalgamation of the labor movement into the democratic party. () social security and all the welfare things. And then, (). I think that's the big thing, the social revolution in this country. It's been tremendous.

Q: What's the most important issue facing the country today?

A: Well, I'll tell you what I think, I think that inflation is the big issue. And I don't think anybody is going to solve it. That's the worst of it. So here is a policy, life insurance, that I bought with great big dollars. Now they're going to pay me off in little bitty dollars. And then you think these poor devils () drawing pension, () are worse. Well, when I retire, my pension is (). No provisions for any increase, I decided it's really (). So it's a way that (). Income tax (), they take it, those who made it, and they fund all these social programs. So, and to a degree, I can understand it. Although, in my experience, people in business and that sort of thing, and it's a game, and if they weren't being paid at all, they'd still work at it. Still keep going. So that's about it.

Q: What do you like most about this country?

A: Well, I would say this, I think the freedom of the individual. By and large, we're not afraid of anyone here, I mean in the sense that, from a political standpoint, (). Safe, and nobody's going to get you for your views, and that, again, is over simplified, but I say by and large, that's true.

Q: How about what do you like least about this country?

A: Inflation.

Q: A few questions on attitudes. Do you think that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful with people?

A: Oh, I would say that I think most people can be trusted. From my experience, yes.

Q: Do you think that most of the time, people try to be helpful, or they're mostly just looking out for themselves?

A: It's amazing how helpful people are. It makes me ashamed (), I get a flat tire on the road, and my golly, three or four people come along and say, well, here, let me help you. Maybe because of my grey hair, I don't know, but () and I realize that the common ordinary fellow will look out for his fellow man much more so than I will. And I always think of that when I go into a restaurant, a working man's type of restaurant. They will be more liberal tippers than I will be. And this is an interesting thing to think about.

Q: Do you think most people would try to take advantage of you, if they had the chance, or would they try to be fair?

A: I think they'd try to be fair. I'm a big believer in that. I'm never suspicious.

Q: Let me just ask you my last question. You said before, you don't think there'd ever be another general strike.

A: No.

Q: You see no conditions under which that would happen?

A: No. Not here, no. I mean locally, no.

Q: How necessary are employers to running businesses? Can workers run businesses without employers?

A: No.

Q: Even cooperative industries, where they split the profits...

END OF INTERVIEW.